

URGENT ACTION

THREE NEW PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE IN BELARUS

Trials against those accused of taking part in or organizing the demonstration in Minsk, Belarus, on 19 December are continuing. Three activists have received sentences, and nine others remain in detention or under house arrest.

Prominent activist **Zmitser Dashkevich**, leader of the Young Front organization, and fellow Young Front member **Eduard Lobau**, were sentenced to two and four years in a labour colony respectively on 25 March for allegedly assaulting passers-by the day before the election on 19 December. Another Young Front activist present at the time told Amnesty International that the group had in fact been attacked, and that the two had been detained to prevent them taking part in the demonstration on 19 December. He said four men had asked them for directions and then punched Zmitser Dashkevich and Eduard Lobau. Police arrived within minutes and detained the three activists and two of the attackers without asking any questions. Zmitser Dashkevich and Eduard Lobau were convicted on the basis of testimony from the two attackers detained with them.

On 29 March **Mikita Likhavid** (20 years old) was sentenced to three years and six months in a labour colony on charges of "mass disorder", for peacefully participating in the opposition demonstrations in December. Mikita Likhavid was among protesters beaten by riot police in disturbances that followed the disputed election on 19 December, in which President Alyaksandr Lukashenka was re-elected for the fourth time amid allegations of vote rigging. Mikita Likhavid was initially detained for an administrative offence but then faced criminal charges, despite the policeman who filed his arrest warrant admitting in court that he had not seen Mikita Likhavid during the protest. Twelve policemen testified in court to having been beaten by Mikita Likhavid.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Belarusian, Russian or your own language:

- Calling on the Belarusian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Zmitser Dashkevich, Eduard Lobau, Mikhita Likhavid and the other nine prisoners of conscience who remain in detention or under house arrest, listing their names as given overleaf;
- Calling for an independent medical expert to visit all detainees to ensure they are receiving adequate medical assistance;
- Reminding Belarus that as a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), it has an obligation to prevent torture and other ill-treatment and to ensure that all such allegations are promptly, independently and effectively investigated and that those reasonably suspected of having perpetrated torture and other ill-treatment are brought to justice in accordance with fair trial standards;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 MAY 2011 TO:

President

Alyaksandr Lukashenka
Administratsia Prezidenta Respubliki Belarus
ul. Karla Marksa, 38
220016 Minsk
BELARUS
Fax: +375 17 226 06 10/ +375 17 222 38 72
Email: contact@president.gov.by

Salutation: Dear President Lukashenka

Prosecutor General

Grigory Alekseevich Vasilevich
Internatsionalnaya str. 22
220050 Minsk
BELARUS
Fax: +375 17 226 42 52

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the fifth update of UA 264/10. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR49/007/2011/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In the immediate aftermath of the Belarus presidential election on 19 December, more than 20,000 people gathered in the centre of the capital Minsk to protest against election rigging and show support for opposition candidates. Seven of the nine opposition presidential candidates were detained in the ensuing police crackdown along with over 600 peaceful demonstrators, many of whom were beaten by riot police. On 25 March, dozens of political and trade union activists, as well as journalists, were detained to prevent them participating in any activities to mark Freedom Day, the anniversary of the creation of the Belarusian People's Republic in 1918. According to observers 70 people were detained in connection with the event – 52 in Minsk and 18 elsewhere.

There are now 12 prisoners of conscience:

Presidential candidates: Mykalau Statkevich, Uladzimir Nyaklyayeu and Andrei Sannikau

Journalists: Alyaksandr Atroshchankau, the press secretary of Andrei Sannikau, Iryna Khalip correspondent for the Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta,

Opposition activists: Pavel Sevyarynets an opposition activist and member of Vital Rymasheusky's campaign team, Uladzimir Kobets, a member of Alyaksandr Sannikau's campaign team, Zmitser Bandarenka, the coordinator of the opposition European Belarus campaign, and Syargei Martseleu, member of Mykalau Statkevich's campaign team, Zmitser Dashkevich, leader of the Young Front organization, Eduard Lobau, Young Front member

Student: Mikita Likhavid

On 29 January Sergei Vaznyak was released on bail, on 6 April Anatol Lyabedka, and on 8 April Alyaksandr Fyaduta were released on bail, but the charges against them remain. Amnesty International continues to gather information about other protesters detained for their participation in the demonstration on 19 December and anticipates that further prisoners of conscience will be declared.

Further information on UA: 264/10 Index: EUR 49/009/2011 Issue Date: 14 April 2011

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